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Ministry of Forests and Range

WILLIAMS LAKE GAINS COMMUNITY FOREST OPPORTUNITY

WILLIAMS LAKE – The City of Williams Lake will be invited to apply for a probationary community forest agreement, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman announced today.

"The provincial government is committed to increasing the involvement of communities in the forest sector across British Columbia," Coleman said. "This opportunity will provide the people of Williams Lake with continued benefits from forestry in the years ahead."

The community forest agreement carries an initial five-year term, and would grant the City the rights to harvest up to 20,000 cubic metres of timber per year on public forest lands within the Williams Lake timber supply area. Community forest tenures are area-based, and give communities exclusive rights to harvest timber, as well as the opportunity to manage forest resources such as recreation, wildlife, water and scenic viewscapes.

"We identified a community forest agreement in our economic development strategic plan," said Mayor Scott Nelson. "It is worth investigating as an opportunity to continue to diversify our economy. We appreciate this opportunity to partner with the Province."

Probationary community forest agreements are a form of legal tenure by which the Province transfers decision-making to communities that wish to more fully participate in the stewardship of local Crown forest resources. They are intended to stimulate long-term employment, forest-related education and skills training as well as other social, environmental and economic benefits while meeting environmental stewardship standards.

After an initial term of five years, the agreements may be replaced with a long-term agreement for 25 to 99 years.

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